

Feb. 2 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

referred to Mayor William Veroneau of Concord; Curt Sokness, superintendent of schools; Clint Cogswell, principal, and Stephen Rothenberg,

sixth grade teacher, Walker Elementary School; and Cullin Wible, Concord High School student.

## Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on the School-to-Work Program in Nashua, New Hampshire February 2, 1996

[*Marie Devlin, director, Southern New Hampshire School-to-Careers Partnership, opened the roundtable by describing the nature of the partnership.*]

*The President.* I just have a few brief remarks I'd like to make. First of all, let me thank all of the people at Sanders for making us feel welcome today and for the good work that they do for our country, and I congratulate them on all of the many things they do, as well as their participation in this program.

As Marie said, I have been interested in this whole concept of how we move young people from school to work for years and years, going way back before I ever even thought about running for President. Many years ago, my wife actually served on a commission that was funded by the Grant Foundation in New York to look at the movement of young Americans from school into the workplace, and particularly those who did not go on to and finish 4-year colleges.

This group found that our country was really the only advanced economy in the world that didn't have a systematic cooperation between the education system and the workplaces of our country to move young people into the workplace in a seamless way that continued their training and guaranteed that they had a much better chance to get a good job with a growing prospect of success, both in terms of pay and promotion and stability of work. This was about 10 years ago.

So for about 10 years I have been really concerned about this, and when I became President, I asked the Congress to pass this law—and it passed with overwhelming bipartisan support—to provide funding for a few years to give every State the chance not to set up a program but to set up a partnership, a network that would build systematic linkages between workplaces and schools and colleges and community colleges and other training systems so that every

young person in our country who finishes high school would be able to go into some line of work which would also carry with it future education and training. I think it's going to make a big difference.

I was very alarmed—I think every American is—by the dramatic divergence in the earnings capacity of young Americans based on the level of education they have, and it happened because we simply did not have a system, particularly for taking care of the young people who didn't go on to the 4-year colleges and into the degree programs. And that's what the school-to-work program is designed to do, to kind of let people like all of you form partnerships to fill that big vacuum. And I hope we can keep the funding up—but we never intended to fund it forever—but I hope we can keep the funding up long enough to get every State in the country to have the kind of network New Hampshire does.

I can say this: In only a year and a half, we now have about 42,000 employers and 116,000 young people participating in this program nationwide, and more will come quickly. So I congratulate you on what you've done in New Hampshire, and I'd like to spend the rest of my time just hearing from all of you about how this actually works for you and how you relate to it.

[*At this point, Ms. Devlin introduced Diana Abbene and another student who described their experiences in the Sanders Lockheed Women in Technology program to enable young women to meet women engineers and see the types of opportunities available in the engineering field. Ms. Devlin then introduced a student intern at Parkland Medical Center and a student intern at the Salem police station who described their experiences.*]

*The President.* It's different from television, huh?

*Participant.* Yes. And my mentor, Eric Lamm's here—

*The President.* Where is he? Stand up there, Mr. Lamm. Thank you.

*Participant.* I just want to thank the Salem police station a lot for opening the doors and having the opportunity for me to go in and experience what a lot of other kids don't get to experience.

*The President.* And did it change your view of law enforcement then?

*Participant.* I always wanted to do it since I was a little kid, so I just wanted—I wanted to go in there and see if this is what I really wanted to do. So yes and no. It didn't, but it did.

[*Ms. Devlin introduced student Joshua Holmes who described his experience at Brooks Automation where he served as a mechanical assembler.*]

*The President.* That's terrific.

[*Ms. Devlin introduced the father of a student intern who described both the opportunities and the real work experience the program had given to his son and thanked Brooks Automation and mentor Nelson Shaw for the opportunity.*]

*The President.* Are they here?

*Participant.* Nelson is here.

*The President.* Who's here? Stand up. Thank you very much, sir.

[*Ms. Devlin introduced participant Greg Ahearn, vice president of an electric company, who described his company's experience with taking student interns and how much he had come to depend on his current intern, Jeremy deGagli.*]

*The President.* Is he here?

*Ms. Devlin.* Jeremy, could you stand up, please? This is Jeremy deGagli.

*The President.* Good for you.

*Mr. deGagli.* Thank you.

*The President.* That's great. Thank you for doing it.

[*Ms. Devlin introduced a participant from Sanders Lockheed who described her experience mentoring several of the young women in the program.*]

*The President.* Diana implied that a lot of the benefit was just for young women to see if there were careers that there are actually women involved in and succeeding in that they

might not have even imagined beforehand. Do you find that?

[*The mentor explained that there were few women in the engineering field and expressed her hope that the school-to-work program would encourage more women to become engineers.*]

*The President.* Let me ask you one other question. This is just related to that. Can you be a little more specific in telling me what the educational benefits are of working here and how you can continue your education, what the company does?

[*The mentor explained that Sanders Lockheed fully reimbursed tuition for higher education.*]

*The President.* The reason I asked you that is one of the issues we are now debating in the context of the balanced budget amendment and what any tax cut should look like and whether there should be one is, I've been urging the Congress to focus on things that will generate higher incomes and greater stability among working people and reward companies for really investing in their people.

The old deduction that companies got for paying for their employees' tuition I think is about to expire, plus which it had certain limits in it. One of the things that I've been urging them to look at is whether or not we ought to have a more generous tax break, both not only to companies but to employees. There's a general rule in the Tax Code that anything that's deductible to a company is taxable to an employee over and above a certain amount. And it seems to me that we have a huge interest in the United States in seeing that people who are already in the work force continue their education and that the tax system ought never to penalize that, I mean within reasonable bounds.

Anyway, that's what we're—one of the things we're looking at as we try to put this whole budget agreement together. I don't think there's a big partisan difference on it. It's not like we're fighting about it; we're more trying to figure out what the right thing to do is and what the best way to encourage employers and employees to take whatever opportunities the employer can possibly afford in terms of time off and the costs of education to go forward. That's why I asked you about it.

It's a big issue, folks. The head of United Technologies gave a speech the other day in which he said he thought that the most urgent

economic issue in the country today was the question of educating the people who are already in the work force, because we couldn't go on as a country where half our people were doing pretty well and half our people never got a raise. And so we had to change the whole—he was arguing that we ought to change the whole tax system so that there would always, always be an incentive for employers to help their employees get more education. Anyway, that's why I asked.

[Ms. Devlin described the Teacher in the Workplace program to give teachers experience working in local companies, after which they would be able to tailor their curriculum to help students see the meaning and relevance of what they were learning. She then introduced a teacher who participated in that program, and he described his experience.]

*The President.* Thank you very much for that testimonial. [Laughter] He was great, wasn't he? You know, I was just sitting here trying to—one of the things that I have to concentrate on all the time is how to explain things in simple, fairly quick terms, because usually I don't get to communicate with all of you like this. Usually I get 8 or 9 seconds through them. So if someone were to ask me, say in a sentence what does all this amount to, you just sort of said it.

Let me just—because I think it's important—for 50 years, more or less, after World War II, for most of that time, there was a clear distinction between the school and the workplace. And within schooling there was a clear distinction between academic programs and vocational programs. What this is really about is erasing those distinctions, merging the school and the workplace, and merging the academic and the vocational.

For one thing, we have no choice, because a lot of these vo-tech programs require now—a vocational program—a high level of technical sophistication, and they are academic in the best sense. And for another we now know that there are a lot of people who learn by doing, not because they have a lower IQ, but because that's the way their minds work. And there are a lot of people who just learn by doing better than they learn by reading, hearing, and speaking.

And I couldn't help but be moved by what Josh said here when he was describing his own experience, that through a series of work experi-

ences he came to think of going to college. It used to be always the other way around. No telling how many people we deprived of the opportunity to develop themselves because we had this artificial barrier between school and work and an artificial barrier between what was academic and what was vocational. And really that's what this school-to-work program is designed to give every State a chance to set up this kind of network to get rid of those barriers. And you said it very well, sir, and I thank you.

[A teacher advocated more in the way of communication between the companies and schools and advocated tailoring the curriculum to advance those goals in the classroom.]

*The President.* Let me just echo that. I wanted to say a special word of thanks to Mr. Ahearn and the other companies who are doing this who don't have hundreds and hundreds of employees. Most new jobs in America are being created by people like you. The Fortune 500 companies have reduced employment in every year—aggregate employment in every year since 1980, every year. But to give you an idea—this is another role model issue—last year there were more new jobs created by businesses owned by women alone than were reduced by the Fortune 500 companies.

So people like you, we can grow our economy on small- and medium-sized businesses and on doing work to support bigger operations like this one. But that means that, for this program to work, we can't depend only on the Sanders and only on the big medical centers and only on the large employers to participate. We have to have the city police departments and the other—the more moderate-sized and small-sized employers participating too.

[A participant discussed the opportunities that the construction business and skilled trades could offer to young people.]

*The President.* Absolutely. And of course the constructions have the best and deepest tradition in our country of taking people in as apprentices. But let me say, based on my own experience, anybody who thinks that construction doesn't require some intellectual capacity has never built a house. [Laughter] I did once, and it was quite a challenge.

*Participant.* Also, just sitting here today, I mean, probably 99 percent of the people look up at the ceiling and don't get excited. But

I'm in this room, I'm excited about this ceiling. [Laughter]

*The President.* You might have lost your mind on the higher floors up there, it's so exciting. [Laughter]

*Ms. Devlin.* I wonder if we could hear a little bit more from the students. I imagine they were a little nervous with some of their opening remarks.

*The President.* They did well, though, didn't they? Didn't all the students do well? They spoke well.

[Two students discussed their experiences as interns at Sanders Lockheed and how it made their school experiences seem more practical.]

*The President.* Is anybody here of your family?

*Participant.* Yes. Both my parents are here.

*The President.* Where are they? So they must have been pleased by that. [Laughter] Would either one of you like to say anything about the program?

[A student's mother stated that the initiative was an excellent opportunity.]

*The President.* That's great. Thank you.

[One student explained how her experience as an intern at the hospital had broadened her view and how she was now considering the full range of medical possibilities from pediatrics to geriatrics to just regular middle-aged people.]

*The President.* We're getting used to it, all us regular middle-aged people. [Laughter]

[The student then described her experience as an intern in the maternity unit and said that it convinced her that she wanted to go into obstetrics.]

*The President.* And you said you saw triplets born?

*Participant.* No, I didn't see triplets—they were born in Massachusetts, and they were transferred to New Hampshire, and I took care of them and I really liked it.

*The President.* How much did they weigh when you got them?

*Participant.* Two of them were 3, and one of them was 4 pounds.

*The President.* That's pretty good for triplets.

[A student further described his experience as an intern with the Salem Police Department and

*said that he started by doing paperwork but later got to ride in the police cruisers.]*

*The President.* It's important, I think, that when you do these things to learn the parts of the job that may not be so exciting. Because, if you think about it, all police work could ultimately be futile, except if you were protecting somebody in that moment, if they didn't keep records. Because any action they take that ultimately may have to be validated in a court of law requires some records. I don't mean just crimes, even if it's an accident, just for an insurance company to pay off.

So I think it's important to learn, you know, no job can be one constant cheap thrill from morning to night—even mine. [Laughter]

*Ms. Devlin.* We would like to take an opportunity now to let those of you in the audience, if you have questions of the President or of any of us at the table to please stand and ask a question.

*The President.* Or if you want to say anything about your program; I know there are a lot of other employers out here. Anybody else? Anyone want to say anything?

*Participant.* Mr. President, we have another program where we've worked with high schools and technology, and that's U.S. First, and I think you know about that.

*The President.* I do.

*Participant.* It's been very active and it's been wonderful working with the high school students and—

*The President.* Thank you for doing that.

*Participant.* Mr. President?

*The President.* Yes. Sorry, sir. [Laughter]

[A participant from a marketing company described his experience with student interns and said that he thought it was a very good thing for the students to learn technology and problem-solving skills, and to deal with real-life situations.]

*The President.* Thank you. Anyone else?

*Ms. Devlin.* A young lady over here.

[A participant from a chemical company said that her organization worked with young people who were employed while attending school and said that this part of the School-to-Careers program helped motivate young people to complete high school.]

*The President.* Thank you.

[A participant asked if the school-to-work program would be affected by the budget and how.]

*The President.* The answer is that it could be affected, because there is a big debate in Washington now, and let me—between the position I've taken that we ought to be doing things like this. Let me state fairly the Republican congressional position, or at least some of them, and I'll try to state their position as strongly as I could. Their view is that this is something everybody ought to do anyway, and we're up to our ears in debt, and therefore, the Federal Government shouldn't spend any money on it. That's essentially their argument.

But my counter is that this is precisely the sort of thing the National Government should be doing. That is, we're not telling anybody how to run a school system; we're not telling anybody how to run a training program; we're not telling anybody how to do anything. We're saying what we can do at the national level better than anyone else can do is to identify what—that is, we can see if there is a national problem, a national challenge, a national need, we can see it. And all we've done is to give a little seed money to States like New Hampshire and then to big community programs so that you can set up the infrastructure to try to put these partnerships together. So my view is, this is precisely the thing we ought to be doing, helping people to make more of their own lives and helping people to solve their problems at the community level, not setting up a Government bureaucracy but trying to be a catalyst to help people solve a problem at the grassroots level that is nevertheless a national problem and therefore needs a national response.

I'll give you another example that we're going to be talking more about tomorrow in New Hampshire; that's the crime bill where we have a program that provides matching funds to communities to hire 100,000 more police officers. We did that because even though there are a lot of people like you who want to be police officers, the violent crime rate tripled in 30 years, and the number of people on the beat only went up by 10 percent. That had the perverse impact of actually taking police off the beat. Why? Because as population goes up, as crime goes up, you need more people in cars covering a wider territory. And as it got more dangerous, you had to put two people in cars, instead of one.

So we said, "Okay, we're not going to tell people do they hire Juan or George or how to train them or where to deploy them, but there is a national need for this." That's the debate we're having. That's why I have tried to say that I would support a balanced budget plan, but we shouldn't cut any educational investments, because we know, as a practical matter, that the level of incomes Americans enjoy and their ability to have a stable workplace environment and a stable career depends upon the level of education with which they come out of high school, whether they can go on after high school, and whether later in life, if they need it, they can get further education.

So my view is, we shouldn't cut these things. But I think I've given you the fair argument on the other side. The fair argument on the other side is, "We have to have a national defense, and that's something only the Federal Government can do. So if there's anything else we're doing, we have a debt, you ought to cut it all." I mean, that's basically their argument. I think we can find a happy middle ground here, and we're working on it.

Now, you should know also—I don't want to bore you with a lot of details here. The balanced budget debate is over a 7-year balanced budget plan. In addition to the 7-year balanced budget plan, we actually have to pass an annual budget every year. So both of us now are trying to reach agreement on the remainder of this year's budget in a way that would be consistent with the overall balanced budget plan that we both presented. That is, we haven't reached agreement on the plan, but both of us say we've got to balance the budget in 7 years now. I have argued for an increase from their position in investments in education, training, technology, research, and the environment, and saving money in some other ways so we can stay on the same budget project.

But that's just so you'll know—the reason I said that is I want all of you, as this debate unfolds, whenever there's a debate about anything that we do in Washington, you should ask yourself the question and debate it just the way I debated it. And think I gave you a fair statement of the Republican congressional position. Sometimes you might think they're right, sometimes you might think I'm right. But that's the kind of debate we're having in Washington about what we should and shouldn't do with the money you send us up there.

Thank you.

[A participant supported the Goals 2000 program for what it offered both teachers and students and praised the school-to-work program for giving a very practical aspect to education.]

*The President.* Thank you. Actually, the Goals 2000 program grew out of work that the Governors did before I became President. It started in 1989 when the Governors met with President Bush at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. And at that time, I was the designated representative of the Democratic Governors. And along with the designated representative of the Republican Governors and a couple of other people, we stayed up all night long, hammering out these national education goals.

So the idea was, we should have national goals, they should be—in as far as possible, they should be measurable goals, then every State should agree to a recognized and accurate system of measuring whether we're meeting the goals so they would know how all of the students were doing, and school districts should as well, but that the Federal Government should in no way be involved in telling schools how they should meet those goals. And any of the funds we put out, we should put out at the grassroots level to support all kinds of experimentation, the maximum level of flexibility and creativity for people. Let's say, now, what is high standards in math and science, for example, or a dropout rate not to exceed 10 percent in the aggregate of any given class. And then you say, "Well, how are you going to measure that?" And you agree on how you're going to measure it, and then all the rest is up to the local school

districts, the schools, working with the States. That's what I believe the system ought to be, and that's what we've tried to design, and I thank you for that.

[At this point, Ms. Devlin thanked everyone for coming and asked the President for closing remarks.]

*The President.* The only thing I'd like to say in closing is, I would like to thank the employers who participate in this very, very much. I would like to thank the educators who support it and make it work. And I would like to thank the students and their parents who participate in it.

And if I could just say one thing, I hope that all of you will continue to support this program, and I hope there will come a time when every student in the State of New Hampshire and every student in the United States who would like to be a part of this program has a constructive opportunity to do so. It's not a program; it is a partnership. I will say again: We have got to abolish the line between what is academic and what is vocational and learning, and we've got to abolish the line between school and work.

Learning is now going to be a lifetime endeavor, and learning should be seen as a dignified form of work, and we should all get together and help each other to do it. And you have set a superb example here, and I am very grateful to you.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The roundtable discussion began at 4:40 p.m. at the Sanders Lockheed Co.

## Statement on the Circuit Court Decision on Replacement Workers February 2, 1996

The right of workers to strike has long been one of America's envied freedoms. Last year, I signed an Executive order prohibiting Federal contractors from permanently replacing workers who exercise their legitimate and historic right to strike.

This Executive order—which furthers the economic and efficient administration of Federal contracts—signals the kind of productive labor-

management relationships that are needed in today's economy.

I regret today's decision by the DC Circuit Court overturning this order. I strongly believe that this Executive order is economically sound, fair, and legal, and accordingly I am instructing my Justice Department to take all appropriate steps to have this decision overturned.